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THE CHURCH— AFTER THE WAR— WHAT?

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Published for the Commission on Interchurch Federations of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

THE CHURCH— AFTER THE WAR— WHAT?

ROBERT E. SPEER
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Introduction by
FRED B. SMITH

ROY B. GUILD, Editor

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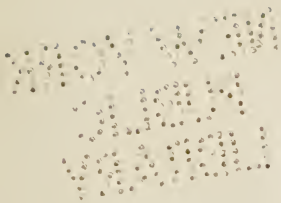

PREFACE

In the messages and reports herein given to the public is found the keynote of the conferences on interchurch work now being held in different parts of the country and to be held in greater number during the coming year.

Two words, community and unity, are to the front in this day. The Church exists for the community. The churches, through unity of spirit and of thought and of action, must become the ablest servants of the community or surrender to other agencies the opportunity that is offered to them.

The religious leaders who wish to see the principles herein stated put into practice, do not now need to experiment. So many cities have interchurch organizations which have made these experiments and have worked out successful plans for cooperative efforts, that others can profit by their experiences. It is earnestly hoped that this series of addresses will arouse many to action.

THE EDITOR.

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I

INTRODUCTION

Fred B. Smith

INTRODUCTION

Those who read this series of remarkable addresses will be profited if they are first reminded of exactly the incidents and the peculiar settings which called forth these expressions. In approaching the close of the Great War and in recognition of the tremendous responsibilities which would come to Protestant Christianity, many of a type and character which had not been encountered hitherto, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America was led to recommend a series of conferences to be held throughout the nation.

The purpose of these conferences was first of all to study anew the questions which are confronting the churches, and second, to bring about nation-wide unity in the expression of the best methods of meeting the needs thus discovered.

In anticipation of this series of larger conventions throughout the country, a few of the greatest leaders were invited to meet at Atlantic City, December 18 and 19, 1918, to outline in general form what it seemed to them ought to be the message and method of this new and larger Christian program. Ninety truly great men spent two remarkable days together. Most of the time was

spent in unprepared, open, informal expressions of personal convictions, hopes, and desires concerning the Church—its future, its message, its methods. To give guidance, however, to the whole, the addresses which are found in this volume were delivered.

The most significant incident in connection with the entire conference referred to, was the fact that these ninety men seemed to have a somewhat incidental interest in the question of *church machinery*. Those who had called the conference had rather anticipated that perhaps the major interest would center around the readjustments so much talked about in the mechanism of organized religion, but for fully one-half of the whole time the conference persistently clung to the question of what is to be the type of message delivered by the Christian Church in this period of remaking a shattered world. The expression was often heard that if every last thing the experts had ever hinted at concerning machinery could be immediately adopted, thus putting the organized elements of religion upon the highest possible plane of efficiency, if the Church then failed to emphasize the things which are related to this new life, it was bound to fail. So strongly did these great leaders feel that the message to be delivered was of primary importance that, with a tenacity which would not yield, they clung to this discussion—going

up on one side and down on the other for one-half of all the time allotted to the conference. It, therefore, seemed nothing less than providential that the addresses found in this book should have been delivered and can be accepted as such a high epitome of the very message these men longed for, prayed for, and declared their determination never to give up until they had fully found.

There was full recognition of the fact that we are living in the midst of great prophecies about better equipment for the Church and its allied societies, and also in a time of great prophecies about the geographical extension of Christianity, as well as in a time when greater words of expectation are uttered concerning cooperation and unity than ever in the past; but these men held in no unmistakable way that vaster than any of these, or all of these combined, is the question of whether the Christian Church is going to deliver a message broad enough in its dimensions to encompass all of life and make this new world of reconstruction accept it as the cardinal doctrine of enduring peace.

Following this closely, however, in ratio of importance came the question of how Protestant Christianity was going to get essential unity upon this larger program. Every voice that spoke gave utterance to a sentiment which seemed to be in the hearts of all, that the

community has become the unit with which Christianity has to deal, and that, therefore, unrelated denominations or societies are fatal to the best interest of the Christian Church. There were present the strongest advocates of rapid, organic church unity of the Protestant forces. There were those present who expressed strong doubts concerning this even as an ultimate goal, but after lengthy debate and after fullest conference there was unanimous approval of the report submitted by the committee of which the Rev. C. B. Wilmer, D.D., of Atlanta, Ga., was Chairman, and another by the commission of which Professor H. L. Willett of the University of Chicago was Chairman, as the surest method for securing practical, immediate results. Summing it up, there can be no doubt but that the unanimous feeling was that some form of inter-church committee, league, club, or federation among the Protestant churches in every city, town, or community of the nation, was the next great step in meeting the trying vexed task of reconstruction. I do not believe there was a delegate who was present, however, in the final hour when that vote was passed adopting these two reports, but who felt assured that eventually there would come greater union in the organic relations of these now unrelated and sometimes competing elements of the Christian Church.

Certainly there was a large majority there who believed, hoped, prayed, and expected even in their day to see a unity of organic Christian forces throughout the world that might be even greater than that spoken of as "Protestant." While many cherish hope in this realm, and free expression was given again and again to that sentiment, they were all agreed that the immediate call was for some form of cooperation which would get practical unity upon this community service which the Christian Church is called upon now to render.

A third note in the order of its importance that should be mentioned here, was the call for larger cooperation in service, in outlining plans and programs, and in mutual understanding of the Protestant churches and their allied societies. A committee, of which Dr. Clarence A. Barbour of the Rochester Theological Seminary was Chairman, dealt with this question and called first of all upon the Christian churches to recognize these allied societies, such as the Sunday School Movement, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the missionary organizations, and the young people's societies, as vital, definite factors in their life. This, of course, provoked some discussion of what the real definition is of the Christian Church, and while there was doubtless a good deal of difference of opinion concerning the various defini-

tions submitted, there was no difference of opinion upon the demand that the Christian Church ought to recognize these societies and organizations as an integral part of its program and everywhere give them the practical demonstration of this in hearty approval of their work. With equal earnestness, however, these organizations were also called upon to recognize their permanent allegiance to the Christian Church and were asked to make known in some form their plans and programs, that the Church as a whole may therefore have the advantage of advanced information concerning local, state, national, or international plans being projected.

It is my belief that if this one item alone can be worked out successfully, so that in the future no one of these societies shall be led to make its plans either for community or for national expression, without recognition of other societies of a kindred type and without recognition of the Church as a whole, the conference will have amply justified itself and its conventions to follow will justify themselves. There are many very sincere, devout, consecrated Christian workers throughout the nation, who have been distressed by the tendency of these societies, each appealing to its own clientele, to make out unrelated community programs that would center in themselves just as though none of the others

were in existence. This note calling for better coordination has elements of great possibility for good to the supreme issues of the Kingdom of God.

Taken as a whole, the conference had in it some men who looked into the future with a scant degree of hope, but they were in the minority. The larger number, while giving due recognition to the difficulties and not unmindful of the vexed situations arising, faced the future in unbroken confidence that the Christian Church is going forward with increasing strength, that it is not a decadent force, that it is not a retreating army, but that, quite to the contrary, counting well the cost, it is facing the reconstruction and the mighty problems of nationalism and internationalism, believing itself to be the repository of the hopes of all for their ultimate success.

The leaders and those particularly responsible for this conference very soon after returning found themselves confronted with a practical problem of carrying out those great ideals of cooperation and unselfishness which had been so strongly preached for forty-eight hours in their presence, for it was learned that exactly at the same time that this conference was in session, a similar one was being held at 25 Madison Avenue, New York City, representing all the missionary societies of the Protestant churches, both home and foreign.

They in turn had been outlining a program of conferences and conventions throughout the nation, to be followed by a financial drive in 1920, which, if carried out parallel with the conferences proposed by the Atlantic City Conference, would give the impression to the nation again of division and of overlapping. In consequence the United Missionary Conference asked those representing the conference held under the auspices of the Federal Council of Churches to appoint a committee of conference to meet them, which was done. Many meetings were held, with the result that instead of carrying two movements down through the nation at about the same time, one of which might have been thought of as having a home accent and the other a missionary accent, these have been consolidated into what is known now as THE INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT OF NORTH AMERICA.

As Chairman of the committee responsible for the conference at Atlantic City December 18th and 19th, I have great satisfaction, as these messages are submitted in this book, in commending it to all those who are interested in the Kingdom of God to the ends of the earth, not as one part of a program, but now as an element in a united program which I firmly believe will mean more to the triumph of the cause of Jesus Christ than any other movement in the history of the Protestant

Church up to this date. This volume and these addresses are released at a time of great confusion of mind, spirit, and body throughout the world. Leagues of nations, world courts, parliaments, and treaties are much talked of as an earnest of a better brotherhood throughout the world and an enduring peace. With all of these I find myself in accord: that they are vital, that they are essential, that they have great potency I am persuaded. Likewise, I am persuaded that unless they all shall be underwritten, permeated, pervaded, inspired by the truths of Jesus Christ as enunciated by the Christian Church, they must eventually fail. While the world needs the helpfulness of all their messages, the world needs most the voice that can interpret life in the terms of spirituality, brotherhood, and universal good will. To this the Christian Church lends itself as never before in its history and goes forward full of hope.

II

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH TODAY

Robert E. Speer

II

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH TODAY

Wherever any group of Christian men come together today, whatever may have been the specified object of their gathering, there is just one subject to which, inevitably, first or last, their minds turn: the subject of the present duty of the Christian Church and of our duty as Christian men in that Church, to that Church, and, through the Church, to the nation and the world. There are many other groups which are assembling in these days which discuss their interests and their rights; and many of these groups, which in other days, would have confined their discussions to their interests and their rights, are thinking now also of duties. But, wherever Christian men come together, it is not a matter of interests or of rights at all: it is a matter exclusively of the duty of the Christian Church of which they are part and of themselves as Christian men in that Church, as to just what its present task is, wherein that task is differentiated from what its task may have been, and how the experiences through which the Church and the world have been passing have defined or affected that task in any way.

The first thing I should like to say, bearing on this general question, is that these experiences have clarified and they have confirmed the fundamental Christian ideas. We are speaking today to an attitude of mind more intelligent and more responsive toward the great fundamental ideas of the Christian faith than any attitude of mind we have known in our generation.

Take just five great ideas:

First: The idea of God. It has been amazing to see through this experience how shallow the skepticism of the past generation has been. No doubt, the atheistic view has eaten more deeply into the moral character of the generation than we can know; but its theological influence, one is tempted now almost to say, has been negligible. There have been no atheists discoverable anywhere in the camps here or in the army on the other side of the sea. Men have believed in God. It has been dumfounding to see how instinctive this belief in God has appeared to be and how absent all the cheap atheism, with which we were familiar before, has been in this great crisis. It has not only been a revelation of how deeply men believed in God: the experience itself has strengthened that faith. The assurance of righteousness in history, the visible spectacle before men's eyes of the judgment of God striking home on the third and fourth genera-

tions after Frederick the Great, the pains which men have experienced in association with righteousness, have all deepened men's faith in God.

Take, second, the idea of man. The old theological paradox we have always held with regard to man—his divinity and his devilishness, his limitless strength and power and his vacillation, his weakness: all of that every man who has passed through this great experience accepts now. The highest estimate that the Christian theory puts on man we see now to be justified; and all that the apostle said about the colossal havoc that sin had made of man we see also now justified before our eyes. The traditional evangelical anthropology is commonplace among the men who have passed through this great experience.

Take, third, the idea of the Church. There are those who think that the Christian Church comes out of this war badly; that now that the War is over, the men will come streaming back from the other side saying, "The Knights of Columbus we know; the Young Men's Christian Association we know; and the Salvation Army we know; but what is this thing they call the Christian Church?" I have no such fears. One trembles for all other organizations as the result of the War; but one has no misgivings whatever regarding the Church; for, if there have been lessons which the War

has taught, which it has burned home out of experience in the lives of men, they are just the lessons that lie at the very heart of the nature of the Christian Church, the meaning of collectivism, of social relationship, the power of fellowship to lift the weak and carry them.

It is amazing, as one has gone out through the camps and mingled with the men, to see how much more those churches which had a vivid sense of the corporate reality of the Church appealed to the men than churches in which that idea was weak and undeveloped. Those churches to which the sacraments were real had an incalculable advantage over those churches to which the sacraments meant comparatively little. It would be easy to multiply illustrations here this evening—all could do it who have had any firsthand contact with the men—to show how powerfully what lies in our thought as deepest in the very nature of the Church is the thing which appealed most to these men, although they, of course, are not aware of its having been the Church. But the principles stand out in men's experience and thought with a new meaning and power.

Take the idea of the Cross, also. The principle of abandonment, of letting one's life go as the agency of achievement; the principle of freedom from all things and of accomplishing results just by naked life; the principle

of atonement: three of the great principles that are embodied in the Cross of Christ have been lived in and through by thousands of men. The idea of the Cross has been made intelligible to many men today by their own actual experience.

Or, take the idea of Christ. Christ is the most outstanding figure in the Army and the Navy today; and not as a teacher, mind you. Men have been bothered by some of the teaching of Christ; some have ignorantly thought, as Conan Doyle felt, that there were a good many of the forms of Christ's teaching that needed to be adjourned until after the War. It is not that side: it is the underlying principles that they feel. Christ is the living supernatural person today of whom they think, very crudely, no doubt, many of them; but if anyone thinks that the mere unitarian gospel appeals to these men, let him go and preach it to them. He will find as he mingles among them that the Godhead we see in Christ has a new significance and meaning and attractiveness to these multitudes of our younger men.

I say, first of all, that the experience through which we have been passing has given us a mental climate in which to preach the great principles of Christianity such as we have not had, with men's minds open to them, with these ideas intelligible to them as they were

not before, with new depths of experience opened in their souls.

In the second place, the War has not only advantaged the Christian faith in the statement of its intellectual convictions. It has set moral and spiritual values in the supreme place in a day when we were beginning to fear whether moral and spiritual values could ever regain that place, when we were driven to think that mercenary considerations had come absolutely to dominate the American mind, when those types of magazines which were most popular and that type of advertising which was deemed the most successful rested on fundamentally unChristian conceptions of success and of the use of life and human relationships. What we see is the reverse of all that, and we know now that these men talk without their audience, that deep in men's hearts there is the capacity to set the moral and spiritual values over against things and all personal interests. I was talking the other day with a father who was telling me about his boys, five out of six of them in the Army, four of whom had been for the last four weeks under fire. What personal interest was there in that—a man to give his five sons to death and those five sons to go without hesitancy?

We had gradually come to believe—it had worked its way into all our conceptions of political economy and international affairs—

that the only motives that were legitimate or effective in the life of nations were the motives of material interest. Now we see there is not a word of truth in it. What Dr. Guttery of England put so picturesquely to us contains what we know to be the truth as he pictured Belgium to us in address after address of his, Belgium as the national soul that had no body. It is the second time we have seen that in history. You may define what you mean by a nation, and your definition will not apply to Belgium since the War began. Was Belgium, therefore, not a nation? Yes, it was a national soul astray in the world without a body. Just a little muddy strip of Flanders, that was all its land. That would not hold the Belgian soul. We see that there is a soul in nations that you can detach from the body of the nation and then bring back again into its body, as Belgium has now come back.

All the emphasis that was laid on morale also was simply a testimony to the unreality of the old materialistic ideas. There is a passage in the second volume of Cromer's "Egypt" in which he recalls Napoleon's maxim that in war the moral is to the material as three to one, and works out the truth of that from his own experience in Egypt. And we see now from the experience we have passed through that that is commonplace and that the moral is to the material as probably a

good deal more than three to one. What we have seen has been the rejection by the great mass of mankind today of the old materialistic view and the acceptance by the world of idealism; of ethical idealism, which is simply a belief in the possibility of the best; which in politics is simply political optimism; of idealism which is simply unselfishness, the exaltation above all other values of life, truth, and duty.

I say not only in the realm of the intellectual statement of our Christian doctrines, but in the moral atmosphere which we are breathing and in the midst of which we are to do our work, the Christian Church has been given a new time. No doubt some of the loyalty and idealism has been crude and imperfect. There is a striking poem by Sir Alfred Lyall. It is the story of a British officer in India who was captured in the foot-hills of the Himalayas by some Mohammedan mountaineers and was offered his life if he would abjure Christianity. He had no Christianity to abjure. He was an agnostic and he was called on simply to avow his agnostic faith and he would be given his life. And he would not do it. So to a God of whom he was not sure, to that God he would still be loyal, and he died. It is an interesting bit of poetry and a wonderful bit of psychology, and it pictures something of what we have been seeing in the world today

—loyalty not so much to any object of loyalty, but just to the idea of loyalty, "loyalty to loyalty," as Professor Royce would have put it. I have seen more meaning in that expression since reading Lyall's poem. How can we exaggerate the opportunity that is offered to us now, to take these great currents of idealism, of loyalty with undefined objects, the expression and outgoing of the deepest in men toward something outside of them, and give that its true goal, rationalize it to these men, found it in the deep, divine, invisible realities?

In the third place, the experience through which we have gone has not only clarified and confirmed our fundamental Christian ideas and set moral and spiritual values in the place of supremacy; but it has defined for us much more clearly the problem of church unity and power. I spoke on this at length last week, and I am not going to repeat what was said then, but there are several added things that can be said. The experience has shown us the facts—I was about to call them the reproachful facts—which constitute a new ground of appeal for our work and for our bringing together our diverse and scattered energies.

For one fact, the War unified the nation. Can the War do for the nation what Christ cannot do for the Church? If a war can unify the nation and Christ cannot unify the

Church, what are the inevitable inferences you must draw? Is Christ less powerful than war or is the Church harder-souled than the nation? There is the fact that men have experienced unity. Thousands of them know it now as the most real factor of their lives, and they do not want to lose that great experience.

Then there is the fact of our discovery in the history of our own activity during the year and a half that has gone by of the prices that we have to pay for our lack of coherent action. We paid heavy penalties. Our children for years will look back and marvel at the penalties that we have paid. It is too late now to go back and escape their payment. But the facts that we have faced this last year look at us reproachfully as they see us hesitating to the extent that we have hesitated in the matter of tightening the lines of our cooperative action.

Our experience has defined more clearly what the problems of unity are. There are five of them. I think you will agree that there are these five, if you come to analyze the problem carefully. The question of Christian unity is a problem of activities, it is a problem of property—and how awful that problem is men only know when they draw near to it and try to attack it—it is a problem of order, it is a problem of faith, and it is a problem of temper. And we are never going to solve the

problem until we have solved it in these five different elements of it.

The experience of the year has made clear to us what the steps are of immediate possible advancement. It has shown to us how much can be accomplished by the possession by men of a common, even though a very distant, ideal. There are ideals that have bound men together in this great struggle that they have not realized, that will not be realized for long generations of time as yet; but the common possession of an adequately commanding ideal, howsoever distant, binds men together.

We have seen how much can be done by taking what steps it is possible for us to take now, without waiting until a far distant goal has been achieved. Every measure of this or any conference in laying out our plans of brotherly accord and agreement now is a help toward that end.

A third great help I got from a Jesuit friend the other evening when he put it all in this little bit of advice: "We can help one another," said he, "we can help one another by healing thoughts and healing feelings."

What we have passed through has not only clarified and confirmed our basic Christian ideas; it has not only established in the first place the principle of unselfishness which Christ set in the first place, and which is one way of coming to a clear vision of truth; it has not

only revealed to us more than we knew before as to what the problem of our unity and power is: it has, because it has done all these things, defined for us afresh and afresh confronted us with our present-day task. And that task is the cooperative witness, the united witness to the great truths that lie at the base of our Christian faith and without which the faith cannot be; and it is the pouring in to the nation and the world of the tides of moral and spiritual power after which men have groped and to whose supremacy they have confessed, and which we know have only one source, in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It seems to me that the present task of the Church is this, and that, while a great deal else can be said which is dealing with the skirtings and the trimmings, still this is the central task beside us now today. It may seem to many a modest way of putting it. I know there are many who would make more ambitious claims for the Church than this, but I do not believe that the Church is the only divine institution in the world. I believe that the State and the family are as divine as the Church, and if there are any of these three institutions that we should dispense with, the Church would not be the last of them. There is a day coming when the perfect society at last shall be established on the earth and

the New Jerusalem shall come down out of God from Heaven, and we need to remind ourselves that there will be a Father in that city, but there will be no temple in it. You can get along without a church much more easily than you can get along without some other things. And I do not believe all the work of the world rests on that institution at all; but I know that the Church is charged with a vital and dynamic duty, that it lies at the very core, and that there never was a day when the discharge of that dynamic duty was more necessary than today, when the world wanted more to find in it a group of men who know that they have what Christ conceived His Church was going to be, who are ready to open wide to all men the doors of a living and divine fellowship.

I can illustrate better what I mean by a contrast between two letters, real ones. One is a letter written by ex-President Eliot, of Harvard, with regard to the Young Men's Christian Association in the city of Peking: "I was in Peking in June, 1912, and, in company with some distinguished Chinese officials, including the Premier, attended an interesting ceremony at the laying of the corner-stone of the new building of the Young Men's Christian Association. Mr. Gailey was then, as now, head of the work. Although I was no more interested then than I am now in the evan-

gelizing work of the Association, I was very much struck with the value of the work done at the institution, particularly two subjects—in the English language and in athletics. The importation into China of baseball and other outdoor sports is one of the very best services that Christian missions there have rendered to the Chinese people."

Over against it put these letters from Bishop Westcott, written to friends in 1866 and 1867: "I cannot think that any estimate of our Lord's work which starts from its ethical aspect can be other than totally deceptive. This was not that which the apostles preached, and not this could have conquered the world. . . . I do feel it ought to be impossible for men to misrepresent the fundamental ideas of Christianity, and yet they do on all sides without fear of contradiction or detection." And not less today than in the day when Bishop Westcott wrote.

What we have to do today is to see our mission as men who represent the Christian Church to the world in the terms in which those men saw it who carried the Church out into the Roman Empire and planted it once and forever in the world, in the terms in which those men have always seen it who have ever succeeded in uplifting human history, who have succeeded, by God's grace, in getting their shoulders under life and heaving it to new

levels. As a friend put it the other day in Professor Ladd's home in New Haven: It is our business first, to witness to the world, to make real to it, and to incarnate in our own lives the Christian conception of God, God in Christ. Second, to reveal in the world and to make incarnate in our fellowship the Christian conception of society. Third, to witness to the world and to experience in our own lives the real principle of history, which is that history is not the self-redemption of humanity, but that history is the self-revelation of God in the redemption of humanity, that what we are dealing with is not human effort, what we are dealing with is a great tide of life that is beating through humanity, finding all kinds of grotesque expressions as the result of the resistance between it and the humanity it has to deal with, but a tide of true life still, beating full and strong. And if the Christian Church does not raise this voice today, if it does not experience the supernatural, if it does not know it in its own life, if it does not construe human experience in history in terms of the supernatural, what are we better than that which we are trying to uplift, or the dead work we are trying to do?

I have running through my mind the last lines of Henry Newbolt's poem on Chinese Gordon:

"And this man was not great by gold or royal state,
By sharp sword or knowledge of earth's wonder;
But, more than all his race, he saw life face to face,
And heard the still small voice above its thunder."

And the hearing of that voice above its thunder, and being mouthpiece for it to groping men today across the world, is that not our first and our last business?

III

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

Rev. Cary B. Wilmer, D.D.

III

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

It seems to me that the question of what the Church of the future is to be is one that can be answered only by asking another question first, and that is, without referring to this epoch or any other, What is the Church in the world for? and then, after asking that question, noting the special conditions under which we must work and the particular problems which face us in any particular epoch or era. I think myself that a wider interpretation of the Gospel is needed.

The Gospel

The first topic before us is "The New or Added Emphasis of the Gospel Message." It would seem to be implied that there is no difference of opinion as to what the gospel message is. I venture to suggest that we need a broader interpretation or definition of the Gospel itself. I feel that I am safe in hazarding the opinion that, even in such a progressive body as this, if I were to ask the question, What do you mean by the Gospel? a majority of the answers would be made in terms of some theory of the atonement. I

believe you would answer so, if you did it, because you are heirs of the Protestant Reformation, which constructed its theory of the Gospel on the interpretation of certain passages of the epistles of the New Testament, and, so far as I can find out, paid little or no attention to what lies back of that, the teachings of our Lord Himself. We owe this discovery partly to the criticism of the Germans. When God wants something out of the way, He gets the Philistines to get it out of the way. Go back to our Lord's teachings, where He began and said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel"—that is, the "good news." I want to ask you to practice a little exegesis and tell me what in that sentence is the meaning of the "good news." The good news consists in the proposition, the Gospel consists in the proposition, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. It is that to which we are to adjust ourselves by repentance and faith.

Of course, the atonement and related matters have their place, but it makes a good deal of difference whether they have their place in that program or whether they constitute the whole definition of the Gospel. The Kingdom of Heaven has been at hand for two thousand years. It is at hand in the same sense that spring is at hand when there is

just one little violet blossoming. All the forces are there which are necessary to bring to pass all the beautiful flowers and trees and everything else. The other side of it is to realize that and to make it actual.

We have lisped at our mothers' knees this prayer: "Our Father Who art in Heaven; hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Not one word about going to Heaven when we die, but everything about bringing Heaven here. If we ask, What is the goal at which we are to aim? we can get that from the message of the seventh angel in the book of Revelation, when the announcement is made that "the kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." St. Paul tells us, "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

So I think the Gospel means primarily the message that the actual forces are here which we need to apply, and so to apply as to get righteousness—individual, social, national, and international; peace—individual, social, national, and international; and joy into every human relationship. I think we need that conception of the Gospel.

The Church

I believe that the Church is not the Kingdom of God: but the Church is the organ

for the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and no family and no state can take its place. The family is divine, the state is divine; but both of them will go to the devil without that which the Church, and the Church alone, possesses. We have the supernatural power, we are the transcendent guide, as the natural family and the state are the secular guides. The Church might be called in a relative sense the Kingdom of Heaven. The family by its very nature cannot produce the transcendent fellowship on which the Kingdom is based, nor can the State: "Whosoever shall do the will of God the same is my brother, and sister, and mother," is the fellowship of the Kingdom of God.

The Church and This Age

If that is what the Church is for, I pass to the present epoch. It will help us if we take a glance at the steps by which we have come to the present situation. The past may be divided into two eras; one in which the Church took itself seriously and undertook to control the political life of the world. The Holy Roman Empire was one illustration of that. The Church did a great deal of good, but it could not do all. It began to get worldly itself, with the result that the Lord sent an explosive force in the shape of the Protestant Reformation. I do not think I do injustice to that

if I say that it rightly confined itself almost entirely to the one essential question of how a person shall get into right relationship with God, and that it answered that question by saying, "Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ"; but in confining the Gospel to that, it gave us a conception of religion as only a scheme by which to go to Heaven when we die—and a mighty poor Heaven, too, in many instances a sugar-plum Heaven—and of the Church as what some one has called "a post-mortem emigration society."

Today we are called on not to surrender justification by faith, although the cry that woke Europe up will put a modern congregation to sleep. We are to stand by this method of getting into right relationship with the source of our being; but I do think we ought to add that these persons, after they get justified, ought to be so used as to make the application of the spirit of Christ to all relationships.

Inadequacy of Individualism

I think there are several lessons we ought to have learned in the past. One is that individualism in the Christian life is inadequate. The theory that, if we make a man a good Christian, he will go out and settle labor questions and the like righteously has been proved false. He does not do that thing.

You have got to give him a bigger idea. A very prominent man who had sense enough to be a judge asked me in Atlanta, "What do you mean by civic righteousness? Why don't you fellows preach the Gospel?" I tried to explain to him the Righteousness of the Kingdom as the aim of the Gospel, and he said that it was a revelation to him.

Impossibility of Direct Ecclesiastical Control

Another lesson we ought to learn is that any method of attempted ecclesiastical control must not be repeated. That is as dead as the Kaiser ought to be. The spirit of Christ must be gotten into human relationships; but it is one thing to say that and quite another to say that the Church must dictate the personnel of the Government or to tell the people, "You must pass such and such laws on pain of being regarded by us as not Christians."

Division of Labor and Cooperation with the State and with Each Other

Another lesson I think we must learn from the past is that there are two principles of human progress: One is division of labor; and the other is cooperation. We have seen various things depart from us. One was the theater, and we have kicked it out of doors. Another is public schools. Education has been taken from the Church very largely and handed

over to the State. I challenge you to do one of two things: either stand with the Roman Catholic Church, put yourself against the great American institution of public schools, and say, "We must have schools controlled by our denominations," or else acknowledge a division of labor and say that it is your task and mine, standing by the public schools as great democratic agencies, to get religion and the spirit into them by ways that are consistent with democratic ideals and with the separation of Church and State.

Another thing we have been taught, and which should be well stressed here, is our need of unity. I need not dwell on that, but I may say this: We cannot force unity, nor can we ask anyone to surrender either his denominational beliefs or denominational loyalty—not that I do not want him to do it in most cases, but that he is not going to do it.

What We Ought to and Can Agree On

But I think we can ask every minister to do these things: We can ask him, in the first place, to abandon his old theology, his individualism, and his selfish scheme of salvation, and to say that his object is to get the Kingdom of God upon earth. I know it sounds dogmatic, but if you brethren do not believe that, you are wrong and you have got to get right! If, for instance, you Baptists believe

that by immersion you can get more righteousness, peace, and joy into the world, stand by it, but use it for that purpose. Do you not see that if we ask people to give up their denominational relationship and denominational loyalty, we ask what is at present an impossibility?

As long as every denomination works for itself—you Methodists try to make Methodists, you Presbyterians try to make Presbyterians, you Episcopalians try to make Episcopalians—what is the result? We move along parallel lines, which can never get any closer together. But if we all work for the Kingdom of God upon earth, we all work along converging lines toward the one point that God's Will be done. That gives every man a place to believe what he does believe. He will find out that a whole lot of these things on which he has been insisting are not so and that others are unnecessary.

Cooperation in Atlanta

Then we can practice cooperation in evangelistic work and social service and in applied Christianity. Here is how we are trying to do that in Atlanta: We have in Atlanta a ministers' association, which is limited to evangelicals, although I believe that the test of membership has been changed to the Apostles' Creed and twenty-five cents. I was not orthodox

enough myself to get into it for a long time. I could get into the Episcopal Church much easier, as far as the theological standard was concerned, than I could join this association. We have a committee on Church Cooperation, composed of clergymen and laymen, and they eat a good lunch once a week at one o'clock. Then here is their program. We have committees on Racial Relationship, Civic Betterment, Education, Law Enforcement, Public Presentation—by that we mean bringing people down there so they will talk to us—Prayer Meetings, Evangelism, and Readjustments; and about that time the man who got up the program asked himself who was going to pay for all that, and he put in Finance, and still he was not through. Other committees were added.

I want to make two or three remarks, if I may, on the spirit and method of this plan. We have a committee, for example, on Labor and Capital. We have had some experience in Atlanta, and I think we have gone through the process recommended by Oscar Wilde, that the way to get rid of a sin is to commit it. We have found that some things are wrong by doing them and we are going to do better. Here is the principle: That committee on Labor and Capital consists of one employer of labor, one man who belongs to the Locomotive Engineers, and one preacher. That

comes pretty near to being the ideal committee, which, I have sometimes thought, should consist of at least three men: one preacher, one lawyer, and one man of common sense. We have not got quite that, but we have one employer, one employe, and one preacher.

That committee does not propose to settle all these strikes and things and have definite programs. It proposes to get in touch with the parties and try to get them to come together and look each other in the face and breathe the right atmosphere. We are going to do the best we can. If we have a program they will not follow, we are going to put the program down until they will follow it. We are going to do as the cowboys do out West with the steers that go in the wrong direction. They do not themselves go in the right direction, because they will be "powerful" lonesome. They get on the outer edge of those steers and gradually bring them around. That is the spirit in which we are going to try to work.

Another thing to which I will call especial attention is this. I do not know whether it has been tried anywhere else or not—in fact, we have not tried it ourselves. We want to mobilize all the religious, moral, and scientific intelligence of the city of Atlanta, whether inside the evangelical association or not. How are we going to do that? I suggested once

that they let a Unitarian minister belong to us and they would not agree. I said, "If we can't out-argue him, we can at least out-vote him," but they would not let him in. So this is the plan: Each one of these committees has the power, and is going to exercise it, of adding to it suitable ministers or laymen of any denomination, or none at all, to serve as members of the committee. One of the most useful citizens in Atlanta is Rabbi Marx, a Jew. As soon as I get back I am going to say, "Marx, I want your help on my committee." Then I want a Roman Catholic on it, and in that way, you see, we shall mobilize all the good forces of that city on these questions, and they do not have to subscribe to any creed. I believe it is a very good idea to get folks to do Christian things, whether they know it or not, with Christian folks. We had a dinner at which we put this plan up to selected ministers and laymen, and we stressed the way in which we were going to work, and we are getting back the men we lost, because we were a little bit extreme before. The budget we have for all this work amounts to $35,000.

That is what I think in a general way about the Church of the Future, and that is how we are trying to solve some of the problems in Atlanta.

IV

MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT

George W. Coleman

IV

MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT

I feel very diffident, somewhat embarrassed as a modest layman, in appearing before such a company of church experts to discuss so vital a question as we have before us this evening. I have been living for the last ten years in a sort of religious Turkish bath, in which I have been going from the hot room to the cold room and back and forth again continually. I find myself very often in the midst of strenuous church activities and in my place as a deacon in the church on Sunday morning, and then on Sunday evening in the midst of a great congregation of people who are utterly outside of the Church, who have little or no sympathy with it, who are very critical of it; but who, if I have been able to judge their trend for the last ten years, are as diligently searching their way to that Kingdom of God as described by our friend who last spoke as anybody that I know.

It might be helpful to us, in starting out on a discussion of the future of the Church, to spend just a moment or two in looking at the Church through the eyes of these outsiders, to see how it looks to them—these

people who are in dead earnest, passionate, about things which, it seems to me, deeply concern the Kingdom of God. These folk are all outside of your church, and my church or any other church which you can name. Their attitude toward the Church is something like this: The Church is hopelessly antiquated; it lives in another world; it speaks an obsolete language; it is helpless in the face of the great evils of civilization; it even condones and defends them; to be a church member is no mark of distinction; it conveys no honor nor even implies saintliness; the Church conforms to all the collective sins of present-day civilization and is concerned largely with the peccadillos of individuals; it is doomed and already passing out. That is the attitude—frank, honest, and even passionate—of great companies of earnest, devoted, and, in many cases, spiritually-minded people.

There is a large measure of truth, I think we would all have to grant, in that criticism, but there is another side to the truth, it seems to me, that these critics do not see at all. They are too far away from the Church in sympathy and in actual contact to be able to apprehend it; and that view I, as an insider, will express in this way: The Church, in its power of continuity, in its widespread pervasiveness, in its priceless heritage, in its potential capacity, in its self-support, in its

dynamic Gospel, and in its glorious and Divine Leader, is still the greatest institution on earth, and no other compares with it. I believe these two statements present both sides of the truth; that there is altogether too much truth in what the critics say, and that what I have stated on the other side cannot be disregarded.

Now, these untoward conditions in the Church, however we may describe them, are undergoing a change, very vital, far-reaching, and fundamental, and I think it is a more or less rapid change. This process of transformation is nothing new. The Church has been changing from the very beginning of its inception. It first took on a Jewish aspect; then Greek culture and afterward Roman imperialism gave it other decided transformations; Protestantism, in order to save the life of the Church, tore it to pieces; commercialism has put the Church to sleep, for a time, at least. And the impending changes in our present civilization are calling the Church to awake, to arouse itself from its lethargy, and to pull itself together, to meet the crucial issues of our times.

Although I am not a student of history and cannot speak authoritatively, I think I am not far off when I say you will find that the Church has always, in a very large degree, conformed itself to the era and the age

of which it has been a part. It has always taken on the economic and social and political aspects of the age in which it found itself. And the Church of the future will do likewise and take on the characteristics of the new age which is coming.

What are some of the characteristics of that new age? Well, I believe we can now discern, in the broadest outlines, something of the nature of the new civilization that is being ushered in. It is already on its way. The only question is, how far and how fast is it going? The first indication of the trend of the age, and, consequently, the trend of the Church, is a change of emphasis from competition to cooperation, not only in business, but in all the affairs of life. No sane business man today looks upon business life from the same point of view that he did ten years ago in the matter of the emphasis to be placed on competition as compared with the emphasis put on cooperation. We have been taught in the past to carry the emphasis on competition to an absurd degree, and the pendulum is swinging back. Whether it will swing too far and we shall get an over-emphasis on cooperation, I do not know. The law heretofore has been, "Everybody for himself and the devil take the hindmost." That is the law today, and we have carried it to an utter absurdity, not only in economics and business and politics,

but also in the Church and in theology and in social matters as well. But at last we are finding out it is better for two men or two thousand men or two hundred thousand men or two million men or two nations or two churches or two denominations or two anything else to work together and share the benefits and results that come from working together, instead of working with enmity, in competition, regardless of each other's welfare.

That is the first broad line that is marking out the new order of civilization.

The second is a change of emphasis on the things that divide men and on the things that unite men. Let me say now that, in all these changes I shall mention, the change is coming, not so much through an utter neglect and repudiation of the one principle and an enthusiastic adoption of the other, as in a change of emphasis. We are not going to forsake all the benefits and advantages of a well-ordered competition, not at all; and we are not going so far as to subject everything to the limitations of cooperation and so carry that too far. Likewise, in lessening the emphasis on the things that divide men and in enlarging the emphasis on the things that unite men, we are not going to forget that there are tremendous values in the things that divide men. Righteousness and wickedness divide men, and they will to the end of

time, let us hope; but there are many other matters on which men disagree which have been exaggerated out of all proportion. Some things will continue forever to divide men, but we are going to put more emphasis hereafter on the things that unite men, and less extreme emphasis on some things that divide them.

Take it along another line—property and life. Do we realize that in our present-day civilization ninety-five per cent of all the laws written upon the statute books, national or state, have to do with the protection of property, and only five per cent have to do with the protection of life? I suppose that is perfectly natural and inevitable, and probably quite proper in the evolution of our civilization, under a spirit of individualism, when it was supposed that an individual was capable of taking care of himself, but when he went away from his property he needed the law to come in and protect it; but in our complex modern society, with our business life, economic life, and industrial life as they are today, that condition no longer obtains to so great a degree and we have to put more emphasis on life and need less emphasis on property. When in the future it comes to be a question between the protection of property and protection of life, the emphasis is going to be more often in favor of men, women, and children, and less often in favor of stocks, bonds, and dividends.

These broad outlines suggest three of the characteristics of the incoming age. They may, perhaps, suggest some of the changes that are going to take place in the world of the Church. I am speaking of the Church, and not of religion; I am speaking of the Church as an organization. The Church has already begun to be ashamed of sectarianism, which is an indication that we are passing from the stage where we want to emphasize the things that divide men to the stage where we want to emphasize the things that unite men. I discriminate in my own mind between sectarianism and denominationalism. It is quite possible to have the fullest cooperation and complete coordination, and still maintain a thorough distinction between people who have different training, but who work together toward the same end. I came across an illustration recently that particularly appealed to me as indicating the trend in this direction. There were three Jewish soldiers in France in a Roman Catholic hospital. A Jewish holy day was coming and they needed some unleavened bread with which to observe the day, and they did not dare ask for it in a Roman Catholic hospital, but they were overheard talking about it, and the good nuns in the hospital, when the day came, supplied these Jewish lads with a sufficient quantity of unleavened bread. The boys were so overwhelmed

that they offered to give the nuns all the money they had to pay for it, but they would not take a cent for doing an act which they felt it was their duty to do; so these three Jewish boys went out into the town and bought the most beautiful roses they could find and brought them into the hospital and gave them to the nuns, and asked them to put them in the chapel at the feet of the statue of Jesus. That is an illustration, it seems to me, of the Christian spirit which may be found everywhere. It emphasizes the things that unite men instead of emphasizing the things that divide men.

We are learning to do away with sectarianism and to put denominationalism in its proper place. Our missionaries in the foreign field were the first to catch this vision, and now we are getting it, also, from the battlefields of France.

There is another thing that the Church is getting ashamed of. It is not quite so much ashamed of it as yet as it is of sectarianism, but it is coming rapidly. The Church is getting ashamed of collective sin, it is getting ashamed of the sins of civilization. Heretofore it put them off upon God, as something entirely beyond the ken of human nature. These matters were within the province of God, and His inscrutable wisdom, but now we are beginning to wake up to the fact that the

Church itself, made up of individual Christian men who are followers of Jesus Christ, is responsible, in some degree at least, for wiping out war, poverty, crime, and disease.

We get a very good suggestion of what is transpiring by way of changes in the Church by just noting some of the great prophets of the modern Church who within the last decade have been standing for the new order, emphasizing the things that unite men instead of the things that divide men, emphasizing cooperation instead of competition, emphasizing the sacredness of life rather than the sacredness of property. All of these prophets point in the same direction, and are utterly in harmony with what our last speaker has said with reference to the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. I refer to Rev. Harry F. Ward of the Methodist Church, Bishop Charles D. Williams of the Episcopal Church, Rev. John Haynes Holmes of the Unitarian Church, Rev. Harold Marshall of the Universalist Church, Rev. John A. Ryan of the Catholic Church, and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of the Jewish Synagogue. These modern prophets I have named have done a great deal to soften the criticism against the churches they represent.

Another thing, it seems to me, is very pertinent in this connection. Our friends outside of the Church, with all their passionate interest

and devotion, have this critical view of the Church, which I gave in the beginning. It makes your blood run cold to hear it, if you are not as used to it as I am. Where did they get this idea? They got it from you and me, from the Church itself. There is no other place where they could get it. Thank Heaven, it is beginning to change, they are beginning to see the matter in a little different light!

May I illustrate by quoting what came to me from one of the friends in Ford Hall? The man probably knew nothing about the kind of church I belonged to, but happened to believe in me and what I stood for, and he said, "Well, if Coleman is the kind of man that his kind of a church produces, then that kind of a church is a good enough church for me." But what opportunity have most of us had to come into personal contact with these people on the outside? And remember, if you please, that we of the Church are in the minority and they, the outsiders, are in a large majority. More than a half, almost two-thirds of all our people are outside of every kind of religious fellowship you know anything about.

One very interesting fact came under my observation in connection with my four months' trip to France and England during the war period. I went over there expecting to find a wonderful revival of the verities of religion

in the hearts of the common soldiers, camouflaged perhaps under rough language and a rough exterior. I had gathered that impression from the books that came out in the first year of the War. But I found nothing of the sort. And I found nobody else who had found anything of the sort. This is not denying that there was a work of grace going on in the hearts of individual men here and there; there were great leaders, like Fred Smith and Harry Fosdick, who had great congregations and did a mighty work; but there was no general, sweeping revival of religion in the hearts of the men in the trenches, and I came back utterly disappointed from that point of view. But I was thoroughly aroused and inspired by finding something else I had not dreamed of at all when I went away, and that was this: That the chaplains and the Young Men's Christian Association secretaries and all the men of religious faith who were over on the other side to help the soldiers had experienced a stirring in their own hearts and minds and a breaking of their old religious crusts and conventions that bodes a great change in their church activities when they come home. They will be very different men from what they were when they went away.

I remember talking to a rector of an Episcopalian Church from Long Island. As the head of a Y M C A center he was cutting a

wide swath at one of the base hospitals in France, and as I saw him handling all the lines of work that pertained to the religious, social, and recreational life of 3,000 men in that hospital, I turned to him and said, "What are you going to do when you go back to your little church with the memory of this great task you have had in your hands?" He shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say, "I can't bother about that now; my hands are full."

But, mind you, when those men come back —particularly those from England, who have seen so much more and suffered so much more—but also those from America, when they come back, they can no more put their new wine into old bottles than they could in Christ's day. Let those who are sitting comfortably at home remember that not only are these chaplains and ministers mostly young men but the men they have served are also young. These chaplains have had their contacts and their reactions with these young men, and they measure them just as you measured them, Mr. Chairman, in that wonderful article you wrote in the *American Magazine*. Something is going to happen in our churches when these men return.

Just one point in concluding. I am going to be rash enough to suggest an ideal church, not for you or me or anybody who is in the

Church, but for these others who are outside of all the churches in larger multitudes than those within the churches. They have come out of all our churches. I just want to read a few paragraphs from a little leaflet of mine as an illustration of the kind of a church I think Jesus Christ Himself would like to have in a community. Did you ever stop to wonder, if Jesus Christ came to our Christian civilization today, would He join your church or my church or any other church represented in this organization? Would He tie Himself down exclusively to some denominational church and remain apart and separated from all the other churches? I think it would be rather difficult for us to imagine Him joining any of our churches. He would go to all of them and He would preach in all of them, but I cannot see how He could be a member of any of them as they stand today.

"My ideal church would be so big and broad, so true and tolerant, so virile and varied, so strong and secure in the hearts of the people, that no one would think of having more than one such institution to serve any given community or neighborhood, even though such district might embrace five or ten thousand souls. You would find within its fellowship Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic, Trinitarian and Unitarian, ritualist and evangelist, native and foreigner, rich and poor,

black, white, and yellow, employer and employe, radical and conservative, socialist and capitalist, *and every one else who sincerely desired to serve and follow Jesus Christ according to the light that God had given him.* But how in the world are we going to have such a diversity in unity as has been suggested, from the spiritual point of view? God Himself has shown us the possibility of infinite diversity in utter unity. All snowflakes are white, fluffy, cold, and made of water. Here is perfect uniformity. But those who know tell us there have never been two snowflakes of precisely the same design since the beginning of the world, although every last one is built on the principle of a hexagon. With the snowflake as a model, our ideal church does not seem so entirely impossible. Now, every one of these individuals who might be in this church is sincerely endeavoring to follow and serve Jesus Christ according to the light God has given him. But some are old and some are young, some are emotional and others intellectual, some are esthetic and some are prosaic, some are intense and some are phlegmatic, some are practical and some are idealistic. Why should we try to make them all alike, or, failing that, tear them apart and set additional and artificial barriers between them? No, no, no. Let them all be members of the Church of the Living God and work

out their own salvation. Let them have natural access to one another and win each other if they can."

If the Allies in this war, who formerly fought one another, have been able under the stress of war to come together, to unite their forces to fight the common enemy, cannot the Lord Jesus Christ, with the influence of the Holy Spirit, gradually, at least, bring all who have the Christian spirit together in harmonious fellowship, in close cooperation, and in a real coordination? It will have to be so or else we shall experience what good old Benjamin Franklin threatened in the days of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The churches will all have to hang together, or they will all hang separately.

V

DECLARATIONS OF THE ATLANTIC CITY CONFERENCE

V

DECLARATIONS OF THE ATLANTIC CITY CONFERENCE

Statement on the Gospel Message

Your Committee on the new or added emphasis of the gospel message for the period of reconstruction begs to report:

We reaffirm our undying confidence in the sufficiency of the Gospel of Christ and the entire adequacy of the gospel message for this age as for all ages. The ages change, Jesus Christ remains the full and perfect satisfaction for changing ages. No new gospel is called for, though new emphasis is needed in an age which calls for the eternal Gospel given by the Father of all men in the Saviour of all men.

It is our judgment that the Protestant churches are imperatively called in these days to new strength and vitality in their message, their methods, and their spirit. Nothing should be permitted to weaken the churches in themselves or in the minds of their members or of the world. We call therefore upon Protestantism, with its glorious Gospel and its abiding spirit, to bear afresh its united testi-

mony to the truth and grace of Christ; to the utmost cooperation of effort in all those regions where cooperative effort will best accomplish the purposes of Christ in the world; to renew its contact with the source of life and power on one side and total human life on the other; and to give itself to a new study of the Gospel of Christ in itself and its application to present times in all lands.

We especially urge the deepest emphasis upon those eternal and fundamental truths which we all hold; the striking of the great note of the Gospel for men and society; the omission of the petty, divisive, conventional notes from the message; the confident preaching of Christ as the redeemer, the pattern, and the power for personal life, and the only true center for social, economic, political, and world life.

We urge the fearless, faithful, and Christian proclamation of Christ's principles of democracy as these principles are to be applied in social, economic, and political life between men and men, between men and women, between classes now divided by possessions or education or social condition, between races now in strained relations which threaten again the world's welfare, and between nations not yet internationalized. We must organize the Christian forces and Christian conscience of this land in mercy, in peace, in justice, and make the

world conscious of God's power and of the love of Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Lord of all.

We believe the Protestant Church should emphasize as never before the "making of the mind" of men and women everywhere by Christianizing all educational forces and activities.

We believe the Protestant Church should bear its united testimony in new vitality and power to the Gospel as a saving power and a law of life for men and society; to the practical results of living faith in Christ, and to those eternal "truths of divine assistance" centering in and finding their expression in Christ's power to save men from sin, in His desire and ability to help every person in trouble or need, in God's eternal, fatherly interest in every human life, and in the eternal comfort of the Spirit in a world broken now by overwhelming sorrow.

We believe the Protestant Church should emphasize that a new morning has come with new ideals and new standards; that this new morning calls for new men and women in Jesus Christ and a new relation to all men and women in Him; that this new morning calls for a squaring of our life with Christ's message, the making the spirit, the teaching, and the principles of Jesus Christ to prevail in the lives and relations of men and nations.

We believe we should emphasize the new

spirit of Christ that has fallen on the world. The spirit of the Cross has been radiantly manifested as a living principle on battlefield and in lonely home. This must not be lost now in a world which has seen it anew.

We believe that the Protestant Church should emphasize anew the objects of the Church as a part of its living message to these times.

The fulness and breadth and richness of its program are its strength. The joy that was set before Him made Jesus to endure the cross and despise the shame. The joy of a new human life in Christ, a new society, a new world in Him should now seem like the sound of a trumpet to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Suggested Amendment

As followers of Christ, the first great Democrat, we affirm the complete sympathy of the Church for the disadvantaged of earth in their right to equality of opportunity—politically, socially, and economically—and we call upon the churches of our land, upon the pulpit and the religious press, to give practical expression to that sympathy by voicing vigorously and unmistakably a demand for the elimination of the anti-social and unchristian principles which now prevail in large degree in the social and industrial worlds, and the substitution of the

principles of cooperation and service as the basis of a new, more Christian social order of brotherhood and helpfulness.

McDowell, Bishop Wm. F., *Chairman.*
Bricker, Rev. L. O.
Bulla, Charles D.
Eleazer, R. B.
Gillanders, William, Y. M. C. A.
Hobbs, Mrs. C. M.
McDowell, Rev. John.
Myers, Rev. Johnston.
Roelofs, Henrietta, Miss.
Speer, Robert E.

Statement on Christian Unity

The vital unity of the Church of the living God in the world is the primary and most potent fact of human society. That this unity has never yet achieved a perfect visible expression among men is an incident of the imperfection of all human institutions, which should not obscure from the Christian mind the actuality of the underlying and partially invisible fact. And the unfailing aspiration of the Christian spirit ought always to be for more complete realization and more adequate manifestation of this reality. The craving for unity among the people of God should therefore be recognized with reverence wherever it appears. The obstacles which traditional and temperamental separations have raised against unison of spirit and unity of action in Christen-

dom must be respected for the historical necessities out of which they have arisen, but should not be reverenced as permanent elements of the Christian situation. The progress of Christian resolution and Christian effort devoted to the exaltation of our common Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ, as Master of humanity and leader of history, must more and more avail, the more earnestly they are prosecuted, to abate differences and heal divisions. The hastening of this progress ought to enlist the zealous endeavor of all servants of Christ unselfishly devoted to the advancement of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Joined in this mind as they are in respect to the needed unity of Christians, the members of this conference none the less recognize that the present situation does not permit immediate realization of the fulness of this conception. It is, however, our conviction that the extraordinary circumstances of the time constitute a challenge to divided Christendom. There is, in the first place, the problem of a new world order. There is, in the second place, the unity of patriotic purpose which has so recently pervaded the citizenship of this country and the still more wonderful spirit and practice of cooperation among the Allies which gained a glorious victory. Moreover, there is the inspiring fact that Christian workers with the Army in France practically divested them-

selves of the peculiar and divisive formulas which had conditioned their former activities, and yet were conscious of neither lack of impulse nor loss of power while they labored strictly and simply as friends of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, they attained a higher degree of effectiveness. Surely the great Head of the Church, who is also King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is calling to us in vain unless we can apply a like spirit of unity and cooperation to the solution of the problems of peace which, if not more numerous, are certainly more complex and more difficult of solution than those that arise in time of war.

This conference, therefore, appeals with eagerness and confidence to all Christian fellowships throughout our nation to adventure united Christian enterprises—enterprises that loom higher and reach farther than the purely denominational outlook would permit. As examples of ideas practicable for immediate execution which will exercise and develop the unity that the times demand, we commend to the consideration of church leaders certain proposals of common tasks that appear to lie immediately ahead along the road toward unity, by which we believe all Christian people today are ready to advance.

1. A determined policy for elimination of over-churching ought to be heartily and generously entered upon by the evangelical bodies.

Under no possible conception of denominational privilege can there be longer maintained an excuse for the planting of churches in any community in numbers greater than the needs of the community call for. Home mission funds should be appropriated in no village or town for more than one local church. Additional churches should be contemplated only when the community grows to a population sufficient to require the creation of an extra parish, which should then be set up by the aid of the mother parish in the place. Religious convictions are entitled to respect, but it must be confessed that mere denominational pride often masquerades as love of truth; and we must all be prepared to ask ourselves whether distinctive denominational differences are of sufficient importance to justify dividing a community against itself.

2. In larger places, where obviously more than one evangelical church is needed to meet the requirements of an increasing population, the common endeavor of Christians should look to the distribution of houses of worship through the municipality in such a fashion as to afford to each, as far as possible, a distinct parish or community field. A common understanding among the churches of growing cities should insure that, as new suburbs are opened, each shall be occupied by some one denomination engaged to conduct the

community church on a basis that will adapt it to the common appreciation of all Christian worshipers.

3. *The unification of educational institutions.* It were greatly to be desired that there could be brought about a consolidation of our denominational institutions of learning, especially in our less populated states where such colleges are not fully endowed or equipped. If this is not practicable, the call of the hour would seem to be that, in larger and more populous states where colleges are already well established, policies ought to be steadily directed towards creating a sense of common service, and, reciprocal to this, a feeling of responsibility on the part of all Christian citizens for all schools and colleges which are conducted in behalf of true evangelical character building. Similar principles applied to theological education would bring about numerous consolidations of seminaries for the training of the ministry.

4. The conference is convinced that immediate and perhaps rapid movement is demanded for the consolidation of missionary boards and societies working in the various Protestant denominations. The combination of these agencies need not wait on the union of the churches supporting them. Already the foreign mission enterprise is recognized as being an enterprise for the support of generic Chris-

tianity and not for the reproduction of diverse peculiarities of Christianity. The home enterprise ought speedily to come out to the height and breadth of a similar principle. And the practical business-like result of appreciation thus created for this common missionary task of all the churches will naturally be a unification of the agencies through which the task is to be accomplished, both at the administrative centers and in the various centers of field work. We desire to express our appreciation of the expressed intention of various church boards engaged in raising reconstructive and other so-called "forward movement" funds, to avoid the expenditure of such funds in competitive enterprises. We express the hope that there will be such consultation and advice between the various church boards expending such funds as will make the intention of the separate boards effective.

5. One of the most significant features of Christian life in the last two years has been the unified ministration of all types of churches to the soldiers of the country through the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. These same organizations ought now to focus in equal unity the continued effort of Christians as the return to normal civic life revives the value of their customary city, village, county, and industrial work. The past tendency of these twin Associations has

been no doubt toward a certain independence from the Church. But recent experience makes it more evident than ever that the Church should not alone dominate these agencies by its constructive influence, but through them must perform a great function of community service which cannot be well directed from parish centers. In particular neighborhoods and isolated communities where the Young Men's or the Young Women's Christian Association cannot readily function, congregations conveniently located should unite in providing, under other forms, community service that shall be stamped with the democratic spirit and administered in honest desire to give life a deeper meaning for all sorts and conditions of men. In congested city communities open forums and settlement houses ought to invite more and more the earnest cooperation of Christian men on a platform transcending sectarian distinctions. Where the spirit of unity in Christ prevails, multiplied opportunities for such unified community service are certain to become visible to the enlightened eyes of spiritually-minded men, and the practice of joint service must continually intensify desire and will for more and more of Christian fellowship in deeds of mercy.

6. Finally, in aiming at a greater unity of Christian forces, we must not forget the end for which we must cooperate, the purpose for

which the Church exists on earth: the realization of God's kingdom in the world, the reign of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit, in all human relationships.

So long as each denomination aims at its own propagation, we move at best upon parallel lines which can never meet; while if each denomination aims at God's rule upon earth, we move upon converging lines which bring us constantly closer together. We, therefore, recommend that the churches in every locality form some sort of organization for cooperative work and agree upon a program adapted to community needs. As a guide to this, we suggest that the religious leaders in every place provide themselves with copies of the Manual of Inter-Church Work and also acquaint themselves with what is being done and attempted in various towns and cities.

Among the problems which church cooperation should aim to solve, we would mention especially those arising from the returned soldier, racial relationships, and labor and capital. And in order that the Church should be able to mobilize for the public good the truly religious and humanity-loving forces to be found in every community outside the so-called evangelical churches, and even outside any church at all, we suggest the plan of having the various committees to which special tasks are assigned call to their aid such persons

as are in sympathy with our general aims and whose constructive abilities will prove helpful, regardless of their religious creeds or church affiliations.

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Athearn, Walter S.
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A Review of the Strength and Weakness of the Inter-Church Federation or Committee Idea, as Applied to State and Local Federations

To attempt an estimate of the momentum gained by the movement thus designated is an effort to calculate the steady pressure of events toward a satisfying realization of that spirit of unity which all Christians recognize in the life of the Church today, and yet the extent of which it is impossible to determine. It includes sentiments and activities of the most varied character, all the way from hesitant and tentative efforts toward cooperation to the most formal proposals of organic union. Yet both of these forms would be at once acknowledged as extreme, for church federation, under whatever form of organization, is a simple and sincere effort to accomplish the common tasks of the churches of God within

a given area in the manner most in harmony with the principle of cooperation, and with the least exhibition of friction.

The strength of the movement inheres in several elements expressed in it:

1. The increasing desire for union among the free, evangelical, Protestant churches, beginning almost immediately after the Reformation and voiced with growing urgency during recent generations.

2. The consciousness that Protestantism, in the effort to make clear and emphatic its testimony to the modern world, suffers a serious inhibition by reason of its divided estate, particularly as contrasted with such apparently unified organizations as the Greek and the Roman churches.

3. The recognition of the economic value of cooperation in religious activities as contrasted with the wastefulness of disunion exhibited in numberless communities, to the regret of the intelligent and the scandal of the Church.

The elements of weakness in the idea of federation seem due largely either to a misinterpretation of the term or of the method, or to erroneous efforts to realize its principles. Among these may be named the following:

1. Objection is at times made to the word "federation," either because of prejudice against the term, or because of a failure to comprehend the free and untrammeled mean-

ing which inheres in it in the vocabulary of Christian cooperation, or because of some unfortunate history through which the idea may have passed in a given locality.

In such cases nothing is gained by insisting upon the term. Any other form of designation is as effective. "Council of Churches," "Committee of Church Cooperation," and others, are titles of equal validity.

2. The fact that certain churches within the boundaries of the evangelical faith refuse affiliation with such a cooperating body on doctrinal grounds, such as particular interpretations of the atonement, or of the second advent, while doubtless a disadvantage, need not be regarded as a serious obstacle. It is rarely the case that *all* the churches of a given area can be counted on at once in such a fellowship. Those who are able to form the cooperating group need not hesitate on the ground of only partial inclusion.

3. More frequently opposition is likely to be encountered on the ground that the federation in a given locality has committed itself too exclusively to some form of activity, such as the suppression of vice or slum redemption, which may not appeal with like urgency to all members of the community. The remedy is, of course, a broadening of the scope and program of the organization, in adjustment to a more ample conception of united responsibility.

4. On the other hand, church federation has encountered the proper criticism that it lost itself in a multitude of trivial details of agitation and futile effort, without attaining any significant objective. A mere hint of such a criticism affords the suggestion for its abatement by resort to a program of adequate and worthful service.

5. A much more serious difficulty is encountered in those localities in which there are already well-established and successful organizations performing some one of the functions which it is the purpose of church federation to discharge. Among those agencies may be named those of the teacher-training ministries, cooperative councils of city missions, missionary campaign committees, evangelistic commissions, and several agencies to which the War has given being. In these cases great tact and good will are essential. There should be no competition. If the particular agency is functioning adequately, some form of affiliation can usually be secured. Otherwise, the larger body of activities and sentiment is likely at last to have the right of way. The problem is one of discretion and patience, rather than real difficulty.

6. One of the outstanding difficulties likely to be met is the lack of interest on the part of ministers, both individually and in denominational groups, in a form of activity which seems

at first remote from the interests habitually associated with their particular churches. For many preachers it requires a considerable experience of the tragedies of sectism to convince them that there are relationships beyond their congregations and denominational lines that would prove of the largest value even to their own work. They have not discovered that the Christian order of the world, which Jesus called the Kingdom of God, is of greater moment than the success of their denominational program.

The remedy for this provincialism is the direction of their attention to the fact that, through the cooperation made possible by federation, a given denomination may find a richer opportunity to render service to the community than it ever conceived on the individualistic basis. Suppose the neglected areas of a city were divided among the denominations, under the auspices of the church federation, or some particular social problem—like the social evil, the saloon, the housing situation, or the Negro population—were assigned to each such group for study and attention. Would not the difficulty disappear?

7. One of the problems which gives pause to the organization of federation work in some localities is that of an adequate financing of the enterprise. Unless it is possible from the first to secure the participation of the denom-

inations as such, or in smaller places, the individual churches, it is evident that at the inception of the work gifts must be sought from interested individuals until the movement can take form sufficiently to make its appeal to the Christian community as a whole. But this should not be permitted to continue longer than necessary. It is possible for a few individuals to obtain an undue and regrettable control of federation affairs through their financial relations to them. Moreover, the cause needs to be rooted in the solicitude of the various participating denominations, and, in the final issue, in the individual congregations themselves. It is from these two sources that the funds should be sought. And if the needs of the organized work of federation do not make an adequate appeal, an enlargement of the service, to include all the cooperative causes like local missions and charities that now tend to seek direct contact with these sources, will provide both worthful activity for federation agencies, and an education in the wider possibilities of united effort.

Furthermore we put ourselves on record as hopeful that the great denominational campaigns for funds now in initiation may be conducted with the explicit understanding that the expenditure of these funds shall be administered on a non-competitive basis. It is too late in the history of Christendom for a

fresh reaction to the struggle for mere denominational prestige in this dangerous field of financial rivalry.

8. In the case of rural churches it has been found of great value, particularly in sparsely settled districts, to assign to various denominations regional sections in which adequate responsibility may be accepted.

9. Another interesting development of co-operative effort is observed in the rapid emergence of community churches. These are the inevitable response of the spirit of economy and good feeling to the challenge presented by the surprising growth of urban districts. The community church is usually composed of members of the various communions either by association or federation, and in its expression of sentiment is likely to be largely indifferent to denominational interests. It may in fact remain entirely unrelated to any outside organization. This, however, does not commend itself to us as the ideal condition. Some type of relationship with the larger Christian world, through some one or more denominations, or through some selected missionary organization, would seem preferable. In this manner the various interests of world-wide missionary and philanthropic character find competent interpretation and response. The inevitable result of community churches remaining in isolation from the usual means of association is such a

drawing together, in their very capacity as a new and interesting manifestation of the religious spirit, as shall eventuate unfortunately in the formation of another denomination. We note with deepest interest the growth of community churches when connected with national religious organizations which tend to give strength, stability, and a world outlook.

The experiences of several years of federation work and the results which are already apparent warrant the conclusion that the method is highly practicable, and certain to be applied in a multitude of places not now included in its operation, both in this land and in the mission fields. We therefore urge the officers of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America to enlarge the resources of the Commission on Federations, so that this ministry of cooperation may be extended as rapidly as possible to areas not yet able to avail themselves of its values.

These are but suggestions, intimating the growing strength and the increasing problems of federation in its manifold expressions. The problems themselves only serve to indicate the rich and varied nature of that cooperation which under many names is appearing in the Church of Christ. It is not the name of federation which is significant, or to be made the subject of contention. It is rather the purpose of all who see the possibilities of such

cooperative effort to capitalize as far as may be the sentiment in favor of unity, and thus to bring the work of the Church to a new level of efficiency and power.

Willett, Prof. Herbert L., *Chairman.*
Chamberlin, Rev. Roy B.
Conover, E. M.
Denny, C. S.
Flynn, Rev. R. O.
Johnson, C. K.
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McConnell, Bishop Francis J.
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Vance, Rev. James I.

America's Unharnessed Spiritual Power

A Minute prepared by Mr. J. E. McAfee and adopted by the Conference.

The Soldier

In welcoming the valiant young life returning from military camps and battlefields, our churches must be conscious that they receive those who in army and navy have looked to religious organizations for a ministry almost as varied as human need, for the interpretation of the eternal realities, for unfailing fellowship in the deadly routine of military discipline and in the direct event of war's tragedy, for recreation in wholesome entertainment and clean sport, for education in foreign languages, in general culture, and even in the technique

of their stern science, and all with an instant adaptation of methods to emergent needs in utter disregard where necessary of traditions and time-honored usages. Moreover, these returning hosts have been in the service of a government which has thrown about its troops moral safeguards never in all the history of military operations thought possible, even when they were considered desirable, and which have made the American Expeditionary Force the marvel of old-world society for its probity and moral cleanliness. Terrible though the mission was upon which our soldiers have been bent, the lofty idealism in which the national undertaking has been interpreted by the President and the unselfish aspirations with which the whole nation has supported its fighting forces have lifted them to heights of heroic self-sacrifice never before attained by great bodies of men in human history.

From all this these youth return to find in countless numbers of our communities a dull and prosaic religious formalism, petty considerations perpetuating factional cleavages, many of life's most vital interests quite untouched by religion's purifying verities, recreation cheaply commercialized and often debased, the whole social and economic order grossened by self-seeking, while too many of our churches are content to interpret religion in the terms of a narrow margin of life's realities.

The Student

Nor is this experience unique. Students have poured out of our institutions of higher training, fired by an unselfish idealism which has supplied the guarantee of those promising social reforms which not even war has wholly checked. For years it was a shame to count the apathy and indifference which this hallowed youthful social passion has often encountered in our churches and which has repelled and stunned large numbers of those who should have been promptly enlisted in the crusade for corporate righteousness and for that Christly social order which it is the perennial mission of the Church to inspire.

The Workingman

Facing the spectacle of centuries-old civilizations fallen into chaos through economic revolution, our churches must view with renewed anxiety the alienation of great masses of American labor. The impotence of old-world religious orders before this tragic social disintegration must shock such complacency as remains among us into a realization of the significance to our civilization of an American church and American working-people estranged from one another and even crossed in purposes. Newer and more advanced democracies than our own are facing the dread consequences of a similar schism, between those who mediate

the verities of religion and those who sweat in the daily toil of society's sustenance. These are stern lessons. They are the tragedies of a world in which we also live. Institutions bearing the name and assuming to mediate the spirit of the Champion of the toiling and heavily laden carry a unique responsibility for economic justice, industrial security, and social righteousness. The holy and unselfish passion for a better world and a truer prosperity flaming in the hearts of multitudes of these workers should generate a sympathy in the Christian Church which shall loyally help to redirect mistaken programs of industrial betterment and guide into the realization of the fundamentally common purposes of all who labor to serve and who follow the Christ.

Church Leadership

No such spiritual energy was ever before concentrated in any land or at any time as the churches now find available in American young life and in masses quickened to larger and juster economic aspirations. Under God nothing is impossible for it. It only awaits mobilization to effect achievements whose only reality heretofore has been the visions of prophets. Greater tragedy can scarcely be conceived if our churches shall stand indifferent or impotent before this challenge to their capacity for leadership. It cannot suffice that

this puissant youth and seasoned vigor shall be offered a secure haven of refuge, a salvation to placid and untroubled bliss. They ask for no baubles of reward. They must sadly or resentfully spurn such a proffer. They seek tasks, an emprise worthy of their prowess. They claim no safety short of following a Saviour into a sacrificial saviourhood.

We call passionately upon all our churches to rise to this incomparable challenge. Compounded benisons of that human well-being which our heroic sons have bled to insure to others we may claim in a reconstructed social order modeled upon the hopes and purposes of Jesus Christ. This awaits only the marshaling of these splendid forces. That church will be no church of Christ which shall miss through lethargy or blind indifference or blundering apprehension of the genius of its Gospel this sublime opportunity to advance the commonwealth of men, the democracy of God on earth.

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